

Helpful Resources

The following list of statewide organizations can provide you with access to information and potential resources for individuals with brain injuries.

Brain Injury Association of MI

1-800-772-4323 www.biami.org

MI Protection and Advocacy

1-800-288-5923 www.mpas.org

MI Legal Services

1-800-875-4130 www.mlan.net

Social Security Disability

1-800-772-1213 www.ssa.gov

MI Child

(children's health insurance program)
1-888-988-6300 www.michigan.gov
Search for
"MI Child"

Children's Special Health Care Services

1-800-359-3722 www.michigan.gov
Search for "CSHCS"

MI Works!

1-800-285-9675 www.michiganworks.org

MI Resource Center

(provides access to Substance Abuse
Coordinating Agency)
1-800-626-4636 www.wearemrc.org

MI Self Help Clearinghouse

1-800-777-5556

MI Rehabilitation Services

1-800-605-6722 www.michigan.gov
Search for "MRS"

MI Association of Centers for Independent Living

1-888-255-2457 www.michigan.gov
Search for
"Independent Living"

Crime Victim Compensation Program

1-517-373-7373

www.michigan.gov
Search for "Crime
Victims Rights"

Additional information and resources are also available at the local/community level. The following resources can be found in your local phone book:

Intermediate School District

Community Mental Health

County Health Department

Center for Independent Living (CIL)

Family Independence Agency (provides access to Medicaid)

MI Choice Waiver

The Michigan Resource Guide for Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury and their Families is a comprehensive guide created to help link persons with TBI and their families to state and local services. To order a copy of the *Guide*, call the Brain Injury Association of Michigan (BIAMI) at 1-800-772-4323, or download these materials at www.michigan.gov/mdch. Search for "traumatic brain injury." This brochure and the *Guide* are also available in Spanish and Arabic.

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Important Information about Working with Persons with Brain Injury and their Families



You may be working with individuals who have brain injuries. You may have questions or concerns about how brain injuries affect the individual and the family, and the special resources or considerations you need to work with this population. This brochure provides information about brain injuries that may help you assist these individuals.

Brain Injury Defined

A brain injury refers to anything that causes brain cell death and loss of function. Primary causes of brain injuries are falls, motor vehicle crashes, assaults, and medical/surgical injuries including anoxia (loss of oxygen to the brain). [For more information regarding brain injury, refer to www.biausa.org]

Characteristics of Brain Injury¹

Just as each individual is unique, so is each brain injury. Physical disabilities, impaired learning, and memory loss are common. These changes may be temporary or permanent. Persons with brain injuries may exhibit any of the following characteristics:

Physical

- Altered speech
- Decreased hearing
- Paralysis
- Severe headaches
- Poor vision
- Seizure disorder
- Muscle spasms
- Reduced endurance

Cognitive Impairments

- Decreased concentration
- Decreased attention
- Altered perception
- Difficulty planning
- Impaired communication skills
- Decreased writing skills
- Decreased short term memory
- Decreased long term memory
- Decreased judgement
- Difficulty sequencing
- Decreased reading skills
- Disorientation
- Decreased problem solving skills
- Decreased personal safety skills

Behavioral/Emotional Changes

- Heightened fatigue
- Increased anxiety
- Low self esteem
- Increased restlessness
- Increased agitation
- Increased mood swings
- Excessive emotions
- Depression
- Sexual dysfunction
- Lack of motivation
- Inability to cope
- Self-centeredness
- Decreased emotional control
- Increased frustration
- Anger control problems

¹Brain Injury Association of Michigan.

Assessment Considerations

A brain injury may cause symptoms that fit other diagnostic categories, disabilities, injuries, or illnesses. They may also cause diagnostic complexities. An assessment may be necessary to determine if an individual has a brain injury. (The following information is adapted from the TBI Tool Kit, TBI-NET: HDI Publishers, Houston, Texas.)

These are some helpful questions that could indicate a person may have a brain injury:

—Did you ever hit your head? Were you ever hit in the head? How were you hit in the head? When and where did you hit your head? Have you ever had a blackout?

—As a result of your head injury, were you ever seen in an emergency room, in a doctor's office or hospitalized? For what reason?

—Did you ever lose consciousness or lose time? For how long? For what reason?

—Have you ever been a victim of domestic violence or child abuse?

—Have you experienced a significant change or increase in the amount and severity of any of the following problems:

■ Headaches; dizziness; anxiety; depression; confusion; difficulty concentrating or remembering; difficulty reading, writing, calculating; difficulty performing your job (if a student, difficulty with schoolwork); poor judgement (causing you to be fired, arrested, assaulted, etc.); poor problem solving; change in relationships with others

—Any other significant medical conditions?

■ Hospitalizations for brain surgeries or tumors, meningitis, stroke, heart attack, diabetes, history of seizures

—What kinds of problems have you had, and what services did you receive?

If you suspect this individual has a brain injury, please have a physician refer the individual to a neuro-psychologist for an evaluation.

Helpful Tips

People with brain injuries tend to have memory difficulties and may persist on a topic and need redirection. They may also become easily frustrated, agitated or angry. Some tips for working with individuals with brain injuries are:

- Avoid overstimulation
- Talk slowly
- Give extra time to respond
- Speak in short sentences
- Put things in writing
- Let them know what to do next
- Follow-up to ensure they take the appropriate next steps
- Have patience
- Stay calm
- Repeat your information
- Take time to listen